



*United States Attorney
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**HARRISON MAN CONVICTED OF COCAINE TRAFFICKING
CHARGES IN WHITE PLAINS FEDERAL COURT**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that JOSE AYALA, of Harrison, New York, was convicted late yesterday in White Plains federal court of narcotics trafficking charges after a jury trial before United States District Judge COLLEEN McMAHON.

The evidence presented by the Government at trial showed that AYALA was part of an interstate cocaine-trafficking conspiracy that brought 26 kilograms of cocaine into Harrison, in Westchester County. The cocaine, which had a potential street value of several million dollars, was transported in secret compartments in the floor of a BMW SUV. Officers of the Drug Enforcement Administration Task Force in Westchester County and of the Harrison Police Department seized the cocaine in the basement of an apartment that AYALA was renting at 11 Souland Street in Harrison.

AYALA faces a minimum of 10 years and a maximum of life

in prison as a result of yesterday's guilty verdicts. He is scheduled to be sentenced before Judge McMAHON in White Plains federal court on February 5, 2004 at 9 A.M.

Two of AYALA's co-conspirators, HERIBERTO FLORES of Harrison, New York, and OSCAR ORTIZ of Rowland Heights, California, have pled guilty to participating in the cocaine conspiracy and face substantial prison terms when they are sentenced.

Mr. COMEY praised the efforts of the Westchester DEA Task Force and the Harrison Police Department for their cooperation in the investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney JACOB W. BUCHDAHL is in charge of the prosecution.

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